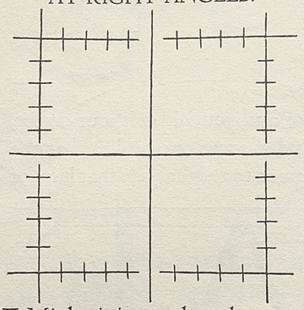
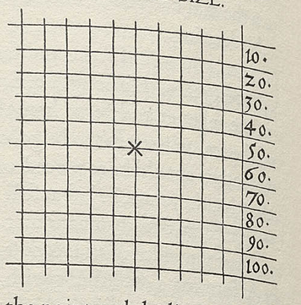
CROSS FORMED OF A PERPENDICULAR LINE AND AN EQUAL HORIZONTAL LINE AT RIGHT ANGLES.



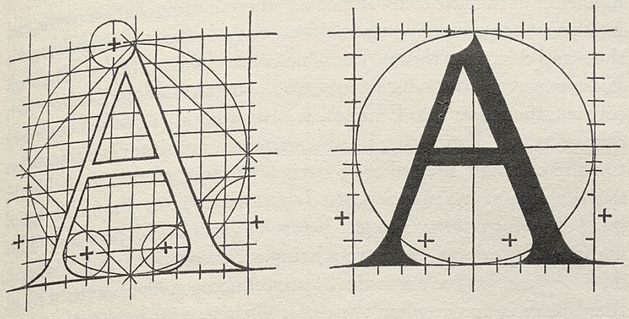
THE ARENA AND FIELD OF EXERCISE FOR MAKING ATTIC LETTERS IN DUE NUMBER AND SIZE.



I Might, it is true, have begun with the point and the line, which are, as I have said at the beginning of the Second Book, the foundation of the measurement of every figure; but I chose to begin with the Cross, for the reasons I have given heretofore. The Square that you see beside the Cross is the arena and field of exercise of our studious purpose to make each one of our Attic letters. You see therein eleven perpendicular lines and as many transverse ones, cross-wise, which make for you ten times ten small squares—one hundred in all. The breadth of one, as I have said, is the thickness of the leg of the letter you propose to make. And observe, that when it shall be your pleasure to try to make an Attic letter, you must before all else make a Square of the height that you wish to give it; then place a cross in the centre, & thereafter the other lines, as many on the one side as on the other, at equal intervals, in such wise that the Square shall be equally divided, as I have said, by eleven perpendicular and as many horizontal lines. Or, if you prefer, draw your Cross, and then, around it, your Square divided equally, as I have many times said.

IN this wise, then, on a square divided as above, we will draw our first letter, A; but, to agree with what I have hereinbefore written, we will draw it in three ways, that is, three A's, of which one shall be black and in the right position; another shall be white, and reversed;* & the third shall be shown with a Compass and a Rule (which is called in Latin, *Radius*), to show that every Attic letter must be drawn with the compass and the rule.

* *Lung sera noir, et a lendroit, lautre sera blanc, et a lenvers.*



THE letter A, here twice drawn in its square, and formed of the I alone, is as broad as it is high, that is to say, of ten units* of breadth and ten of height, contained between eleven perpendicular & as many horizontal lines. To draw it properly, five turns of the compass are needed, for describing which I have marked the centres with the sign +, where the fixed foot of the compass should be placed, in order to describe the circumference. Observe, besides, that I place this same sign +, outside the square, on the perpendicular median line of the aspirate H, of the I, the O, the S, the X, and the Z, not for the foot of the compass to be placed thereon, but to show that there is the top of the said letters, which are almost the same at top & bottom. There is, however, & must be, some difference, except in the O, the outer circumference of which is entirely uniform. A is in shape pyramidal and triangular, in accordance with natural reason. We see that things built up to a point are more solid and durable than those which are as broad at the top as at the bottom. In another aspect, the A is somewhat in the shape of a compass; its two feet represent the feet of the compass, & the top the joint. The cross-bar of the A signifies a rule: a covert indication that, properly to design and draw Attic letters, the compass & the rule are necessarily required. Furthermore, A has its legs thickened & furnished with feet,—just as a man has his legs and feet for walking and passing on,—to tell us covertly that from it, the first letter in alphabetical order, we must pass on to B, & C, & all the other letters according to their arrangement. A must be pronounced with the mouth open, & as I have said before, where Martianus Capella is quoted—*sub hiatu oris congruo solo spiritu.* Which thing the Italians observe with care, not only

* *Corps.*

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